

California Coastal Commission

Implementation Plan

June 23, 2021
Jack Ainsworth, Executive Director

Implementation Plan Submitted for:
June 30, 2021

RISKS AND CONTROLS

Risk: FI\$CAL CONVERSION

The Commission is in FI\$Cal Conversion Wave 4, and had a 'go live' date of July 2017. The conversion to FI\$Cal has affected many of the Commission's accounting, procurement, business services and budgeting procedures. As with many other State agencies, the conversion continues to present numerous challenges. Using the FI\$Cal system is more time consuming than previous systems, and we have found that accounting, procurement, and budget tasks in FI\$Cal take about triple the time that the same tasks took under the former CalStars system.

Commission staff is fully committed to getting to be fully operational in the Fi\$Cal system for accounting, billing, procurement, budgeting, and expenditure tracking. The reality of the Fi\$Cal system is that while it has many important features, it is time consuming, cumbersome, and there are often system errors and inaccuracies that we need Fi\$Cal staff assistance to resolve. This often means significant delays in all processes and reconciliation. Because of some of the structural problems with the overall Fi\$Cal system that are yet to be resolved, fiscal year end close take much longer than it should and it is difficult to have a real time accurate picture of budget status. The Commission currently has insufficient staff capacity to address workload challenges in accounting, procurement, business services, and budget development and tracking. The cause of this risk is the requirement to transition to a new accounting system.

The result could be inaccurate accounting, as well as the possibility of inappropriate expenditures or other actions based on such inaccurate accounting.

The Commission is continuing to address this risk by empowering our team of FI\$Cal 'super users' who oversee implementation. The super user team is made up of high level staff from multiple key departments, including budgeting, accounting, and business services (procurement). The team participated in the FI\$Cal training, and is charged with overseeing implementation of the system within the agency. The super user team will continue to identify specific needs and pursue resources to help address those needs.

The Commission is also addressing this risk by working with the Department of Finance and the Fi\$Cal staff for specific problem-solving assistance. Commission staff attend all relevant Fi\$Cal training and collaborate with other agencies to get insights and assistance.

Control: FI\$CAL CONVERSION

The Commission is continuing to address this risk by empowering our team of FI\$Cal 'super users' who oversee implementation. The super user team is made up of high level staff from multiple key departments, including budgeting, accounting, and business services (procurement). The team

participated in the Fi\$Cal training, and is charged with overseeing implementation of the system within the agency. The super user team will continue to identify specific needs and pursue resources to help address those needs.

The Commission is also addressing this risk by working with the Department of Finance and the Fi\$Cal staff for specific problem-solving assistance. Commission staff attend all relevant Fi\$Cal training and collaborate with other agencies to get insights and assistance.

Update With Progress—June 30, 2021

1. The COVID-19 shutdown and required telework caused some challenges for the Accounting and Business Services staff due to initial insufficient number of laptops and lack of VPN access to key documents. It took many months for the Commission to procure adequate laptops for all staff and to gain VPN access to critical documents to process from home. The ZOOM FI\$CAL training offered during COVID- 19 shutdown was useful, but not as effective as in- person hands on work with FI\$CAL staff during in-person training sessions.
2. Accounting and Business Services staff continue to work with DOF and FI\$CAL staff to resolve issues with FI\$CAL as they arise.
3. FI\$CAL Job Aids are important tools for staff to find out about changes and updates and ways to use FI\$CAL more efficiently. Often the FI\$CAL Job Aids are out of date though, and it can be very difficult to identify the correct Job Aid for the problem at hand.
4. Accounting and Business Services staff have experienced numerous glitches/software issues in the FI\$CAL system that make it difficult to process Purchase Orders (POs) in an accurate and timely manner. This requires staff to reach out for assistance on a regular basis to the FI\$CAL Services Center. The search functions regarding POs in FI\$CAL are not complete and comprehensive. This causes inefficiencies and inaccuracies in tracking POs and requires added manual work for staff.
5. Accounting staff continue to find inaccuracies and inconsistencies with some department accounting data in FI\$CAL requiring extensive work with FI\$CAL staff to reconcile. This in turn causes issues with staff being able to keep current with month end reports and data needed for accurate fiscal year end close.
6. The State Controller's Office (SCO) is continually adding new functionalities and processes that require Accounting staff to learn new processes and procedures in FI\$CAL. This adds to workload and continues to be an important and challenging part of the ongoing tasks needed for a full and effective transition to the FI\$CAL system.
7. The FI\$CAL system is not set up to automatically generate required year end reports by fund and is also not set up to generate essential monthly expenditure reports that are critical for tracking expenditures throughout the year monthly. The FI\$CAL system needs to be updated and refined to accomplish these key tasks. Currently these inadequacies in the FI\$CAL system require Commission staff to do many tasks manually that were previously automatically generated by the old CalStars system. The required manual generation of these key reports is unnecessarily time consuming and is an opportunity for errors.

Contact Person(s): Alison Dettmer

Is the control put into practice: Yes

Is this control reducing the risk as expected: Partially

What's Next

1. Accounting staff expects to be able for the first time since the FISCAL conversion started to complete fiscal year end close for all funds by or close to the August 31, 2021 deadline.
2. After July 1, 2021, Commission managers will hire one Accounting and one Business Services staff member into two new positions included in the FY 2021-2022 budget to address heavy workload. Managers will then train these new hires to work with FISCAL and address large workload backlog and increase timeliness and efficiencies. New employees will also attend FISCAL run classes.

Next Milestone: December 31, 2021

Risk: KEY PERSON DEPENDENCE, SUCCESSION PLANNING

The Commission, like many state agencies, has had numerous retirements of very experienced senior staff and is facing a very large number of retirements in the current year and over the next one to five fiscal years. This wave of retirements will include numerous senior staff members who have had long careers in public service and a wealth of knowledge and skills.

The cause of the risk is that the state workforce has a large number of baby boomers, who are now reaching retirement age.

The potential result of a large number of retirements could be loss of institutional knowledge related disruption to operations.

Control: WORKFORCE PLANNING

The Commission is preparing for the loss of the experienced staff by implementing succession planning and knowledge transfer strategies, recruiting and training a skilled and diverse new staff, and pursuing structural salary increases for the Coastal Program Analyst job classification series and geopay for all staff to improve retention. These measures are existing internal controls that are described in the current Commission's Strategic Plan and further accentuated in the draft 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, and are carried out pursuant to the implementation and monitoring processes provided in that document. These measures will help ensure the Commission continues to operate effectively and efficiently throughout the upcoming wave of retirements. Increasing and fostering diversity in the workplace is a goal shared by the Commission and agencies, organizations, and businesses across all sectors. A diverse workforce enables organizational success by supporting a broad range of employee perspectives, skills, and ideas. The Commission will continue and expand its internship program, and it will identify opportunities and strategies for enhanced outreach to recruit a diverse and highly qualified applicant pool for needed positions.

Update With Progress—June 30, 2021

1. Due to the COVID-19 shutdown, work on the update of the Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan was delayed. The staff was able to complete the updated plan and on

November 6, 2020, the California Coastal Commission unanimously adopted the California Coastal Commission Final Strategic Plan for 2021- 2015. The Plan includes key components re: Work Force Planning and enhancing Internal Agency Capacity and Effectiveness.

2. Work is currently underway to complete the Coastal Commission's Work Force Plan to be consistent with the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. We expect to finalize the Work Force Plan with Cal HR in late summer/early fall 2021.
3. The Commission has and will continue to experience a high level of retirements of very experienced senior staff members and this trend will continue for at least the next 5 years. This exodus of a large number of staff with a wealth of knowledge and institutional memory makes it a challenge to train the next generation of staff.
4. There continues to be an ongoing problem with recruitment and retention of staff in all parts of the Commission due to low salaries compared with local, and federal agencies and some other state agencies and the heavy workload at the Coastal Commission. Newly hired staff often leave in 1-5 years when they land jobs with higher pay. This means the Commission staff spends a large amount of effort on recruitment, hiring and training on a continuous basis.
5. Commission management continues to pursue salary enhancements through Cal HR and collective bargaining.
6. Within its tight HR staffing constraints, the Commission continues to try to broaden its recruitment methods to connect with diverse job candidates to enhance the diversity of the Commission's work force. The Commission continues to use internship and fellowship programs as a recruitment tool for a skilled and diverse workforce.
7. During the COVID-19 Shutdown, the Commission moved from in person interview exam panels for civil service exams to monthly zoom exam panels. This change has allowed us to test more regularly and to keep the lists more current and allowed the Commission to fill vacant positions more efficiently.
8. The Commission is beginning to work with Cal HR to develop on-line exams for the Coastal Program Analyst civil service series. We expect the process to be completed by early 2022.

Contact Person(s): Alison Dettmer

Is the control put into practice: Yes

Is this control reducing the risk as expected: Partially

What's Next

1. Complete the final Coastal Commission Work Force Plan.
2. Continue to advocate to Cal HR salary restructuring of the Commission's Coastal Program Analyst series, pursue GEO Pay for all the civil service classes the Commission uses and push as much as possible through the collective bargaining process to enhance all staff salaries.

Next Milestone: December 31, 2021

Risk: EXTERNAL – FUNDING – SOURCES, LEVELS

The Commission receives approximately 10% of its total budget from the Federal government through Coastal Zone Management Grants. Although this has been a steady funding source for many years, recent discussions at the national level indicate that Federal funding for this program may be cut significantly in the next several years.

The cause of this risk is changes in policy direction at the Federal level.

The loss of this funding would have a significant impact on the Commission's ability to maintain its operations.

Control: FUNDING – SOURCES, LEVELS

The Commission's senior staff is closely monitoring Federal budget discussions and evaluating potential impacts of a loss or reduction of this funding on operations. The result will be that the Commission will be prepared to develop and submit a budget change proposal in the event that funding is significantly reduced or cut altogether.

Update With Progress—June 30, 2021

1. Predicted issues with a significant reduction in federal NOAA funds did not occur. With the change in the federal administration in January 2021, we no longer believe there will a significant risk of the reduction of federal coastal zone management funds.

Contact Person(s): Alison Dettmer

Is the control put into practice: Yes

Is this control reducing the risk as expected: Yes

Risk: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, STAFFING LEVELS

The Commission joined a CALHR Cohort team to prepare a Work Force Plan for the Coastal Commission. We completed a draft work force plan and a final work force plan will be completed in 2020 in conjunction with the completion and adoption of the 2020-2025 updated Strategic Plan. The work force plan identifies key issues around staff salaries, recruitment and retention, diversifying the work force, training, and succession plan that are relevant to this SLAA Report and our updated draft 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

The Commission recruits and hires excellent staff, but because of low state salaries for many of its positions, the Commission has trouble retaining staff.

The cause of this risk is that state salaries, especially in coastal areas are much lower than salaries for comparable positions in local, regional, and federal agencies. The Commission had a salary study prepared for the Coastal Program Analyst series, and found that employees are paid up to 40% less than their local government counterparts.

The result is that in the past few years, we have seen a pattern of entry level staff staying only one to

two years and leaving for other higher paying government jobs. This makes it very difficult to sustain a team of well trained staff to implement the Coastal Act. Also, it is time consuming and expensive to recruit, hire, and train new staff to then have them leave after a couple of years because of low pay.

Control: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, STAFFING LEVELS

The Commission submitted a salary package to CalHR, and is continuing to pursue salary increases, as well as geopay for all our employees. Salary increases are absolutely essential to help the Commission improve retention levels. Enhancing salary structure is one of the top priorities of the Commission's draft 2020-2025 updated Strategic Plan.

Update With Progress—June 30, 2021

1. Due to the COVID-19 shutdown, work on the update of the Coastal Commission's Strategic Plan was delayed. The staff was able to complete the updated plan and on November 6, 2020, the California Coastal Commission unanimously adopted the California Coastal Commission Final Strategic Plan for 2021- 2025. The Plan includes key components re: Work Force Planning and enhancing Internal Agency Capacity and Effectiveness.
2. Work is currently underway to complete the Coastal Commission's Work Force Plan to be consistent with the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. We expect to finalize the Work Force Plan with Cal HR in late summer/early fall 2021.
3. The Commission has and will continue to experience a high level of retirements of very experienced senior staff members and this trend will continue for at least the next 5 years. This exodus of a large number of staff member with a wealth of knowledge and institutional memory makes it a challenge to train the next generation of staff members.
4. There continues to be an ongoing problem with recruitment and retention of staff in all parts of the Commission due to low salaries compared with local, and federal agencies and some other state agencies and the heavy workload at the Coastal Commission. Newly hired staff often leave in 1-5 years when they land jobs with higher pay. This means the Commission staff spends a large amount of effort on recruitment, hiring and training on a continuous basis.
5. Commission management continues to pursue salary enhancements through Cal HR and collective bargaining.
6. Within its tight HR staffing constraints, the Commission continues to try to broaden its recruitment methods to connect with diverse job candidates to enhance the diversity of the Commission's work force. The Commission continues to use internship and fellowship programs as a recruitment tool for a skilled and diverse workforce.
7. During the COVID-19 Shutdown, the Commission moved from in person interview exam panels for civil service exams to monthly zoom exam panels. This change has allowed us to test more regularly and to keep the lists more current and allowed the Commission to fill vacant positions more efficiently.
8. The Commission is beginning to work with Cal HR to develop on-line exams for the Coastal Program Analyst civil service series. We expect the process to be completed by early 2022.

Contact Person(s): Alison Dettmer

Is the control put into practice: Yes

Is this control reducing the risk as expected: Partially

What's Next

1. Complete the final Coastal Commission Work Force Plan.
2. Continue to advocate to Cal HR salary restructuring of the Commission's Coastal Program Analyst series, pursue GEO Pay for all the civil service classes the Commission uses and push as much as possible through the collective bargaining process to enhance staff salaries.

Next Milestone: December 31, 2021

Risk: STAFF – TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE, COMPETENCE

Staff training and capacity is one of the most fundamental areas to address to ensure the future success of the Commission, particularly with the anticipated level of retirements and necessary succession in the agency.

The cause of this risk is the complex nature of the Commission's work and the need for very specialized legal and technical knowledge.

The result is that if staff is not appropriately trained, the agency will not be able to support effective implementation of the Coastal Act.

Control: STAFF – TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE, COMPETENCE

The Commission conducts regular staff training, including on technical, legal, enforcement and IT/database related topics, and updates and disseminates related staff training materials. In addition, the Commission is completing work on a Federal grant to develop and implement a staff training program focused on Local Coastal Programs (LCPs), which are a key tool in our partnership with local governments throughout the state. The Commission conducted a survey of our line staff and developed a draft framework to ensure staff needs are met. In the coming years, the Commission will utilize Federal grant funds to finalize the training framework and to deliver new training sessions and materials. This work will be monitored through the Federal grant reporting process, as well as through the Strategic Plan, which has several action items related to this grant. These actions will enhance staff training. The public draft updated Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 include new specific action items for training to support staff skills and professional development.

Update With Progress—June 30, 2021

1. Because of staff turnover (mainly due to inadequate salaries), there were many vacant positions that needed to be filled during the COVID-19 shutdown. Recruitment and hiring during the pandemic using only virtual tools such as video conferencing was challenging. Onboarding new staff and training and integrating the new staff into the systems and procedures at the Coastal Commission virtually with little or no in person contact was especially difficult.
 2. COVID-19 caused a delay in completing the development of online training programs
-

related to LCPs because of limited IT staff available to assist with the completion of the online training modules. Progress is now continuing, and training programs are identified as priorities in the Commission's federal grants and in the Strategic Plan for 2021-2025.

3. HR staff oversees the rollout and records the completion of online required training for all staff on ethics, sexual harassment, cyber security, and defensive driving.
4. New supervisors and managers have attended required training.

Contact Person(s): Alison Dettmer

Is the control put into practice: Partially

Is this control reducing the risk as expected: Partially

What's Next

1. New supervisors and managers will continue to take the required state training.
2. New components of the LCP training modules will be completed to meet federal grant requirements and will be available for staff use.
3. Commission executive management and HR staff will push to have 100% compliance of all staff to complete all required trainings (ethics, sexual harassment, defensive driving, and cyber security) by December 2021

Next Milestone: December 31, 2021

Risk: TECHNOLOGY – DATA SECURITY

In July 2017, the California Military Department Cyber Security Defense Team conducted an Independent Security Assessment (ISA) of the Coastal Commission's computer network systems and operations. The ISA identified a number of equipment and software upgrades and changes to operational practices to enhance the security of the Commission's computer network systems and operations.

This data security risk is caused by the increasing capabilities and ever-evolving nature of information technology.

The result of the risk could be a breach of confidential or other sensitive information.

Control: TECHNOLOGY – DATA SECURITY

To address the findings and recommendations of the ISA, the Commission is continuing with implementation of upgrades and required remediation. The Commission's IT staff monitor and adjust, as necessary, upgrades to network, operational and security systems. The Commission continues to seek necessary funding to fully implement all the recommendations of the 2017 ISA.

Update With Progress—June 30, 2021

1. The Commission relocated its headquarters office in San Francisco in August of 2020, which included the design and deployment of a new Commission-wide computer network system and infrastructure. Included in the new system were several upgrades to firewall and security systems that addressed several of the

- deficiencies identified during the 2017 ISA.
2. Over the last six months the Commission has procured new key network equipment (servers, switches and domain controllers), had has been working on provisioning and deployment to all commission offices. These deployments provide improved network operation and functionality and provide up-to-date security features.
 3. In response to Covid-19, the Commission instituted an agency-wide telework policy, procured new laptops for all staff, and worked closely with the CNRA to provide staff with secure cloud-based services to continue agency operations in a secure environment. Ongoing training and support activities over the last six months have continued to enhance agency operations and network security.
 4. The Commission has been unable to secure additional funding to address the remaining security recommendations of the 2017 ISA. A second ISA by the California Military Department Cyber Security Defense Team completed in September 2020 identified many of the same security issues outstanding from the 2017 ISA and made similar recommendations for remediation. To date, the Commission has been unable to secure additional funding to address the identified recommendations.

Contact Person(s): Alison Dettmer

Is the control put into practice: Partially

Is this control reducing the risk as expected: Partially

What's Next

1. The Commission's IT staff will continue to monitor and adjust, as necessary, upgrades to network, operational and security systems. The Commission continues to seek necessary funding to fully implement all the recommendations of both the 2017 and 2020 ISA.
2. Staff will complete deployment of new key network equipment to all Commission offices.
3. Commission staff is working with CRNA data center staff to develop an integrated cloud-based network data storage system. This would provide long term secure storage of the commissions operational data and provide protected storage of the Commission's archival and regulatory records which must legally be maintained in perpetuity. This effort has taken critical importance due a recent fire at the State Records Center which has reportedly resulted in damage to Commission paper records. The Commission is seeking funding to support the digital conversion and storage of these important agency records.
4. The Commission is currently migrating a key agency data system to a secure cloud-based environment to improve security and operational access for staff and provide access for the public to key data via the internet. This effort is expected to be completed in the fall of 2021.

Next Milestone: December 31, 2021

Risk: POLITICAL, REPUTATION, MEDIA

The Commission is a quasi-judicial body that takes actions on land use regulations and development permits at monthly public meetings. Many of these actions are highly sensitive, with numerous stakeholders and intense public interest. Further, as social media changes the nature of information sharing, it is increasingly important to establish a proactive social media presence.

The cause of this risk is the nature of the Commission's actions on land use regulations and development permits, including actions that affect high profile people and businesses, as well as actions that affect important beach access and coastal resource areas.

The result could be negative media attention targeted towards the Commission.

Control: POLITICAL, REPUTATION, MEDIA

The Commission established and filled a Public Information Officer position. The Public Information Officer prepares press releases and works with staff to effectively communicate with members of the press. The Public Information Officer is responsible for monitoring and reporting on significant negative media attention and developing appropriate response strategies. Through the implementation of the 2020-2025 updated Strategic Plan, the Commission will continue to enhance its social media strategy and press protocols to help protect the Commission's reputation and media presence.

Update With Progress—June 30, 2021

1. The Commission's Public Information Officer (PIO) works closely with the print press and the radio and TV and online reporters to provide accurate information on the Commission's actions /votes on key regulatory and planning actions.
2. The Commission's Public information Officer works closely with PIOs in other California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) departments to co-ordinate on external communication on key interagency policy issues such as climate resiliency and sea level rise.
3. Coastal Commission executive staff and senior managers serve on many working groups with other state federal and local agencies that address key coastal resource and environmental issues. This collaboration and communication assist in the understanding of the Commission's work to implement the Coastal Act.
4. The PIO along with the Environmental Justice Program Manager consistently reach out to underserved communities that could be affected by Coastal Commission planning and regulatory actions to make sure these communities have adequate information and are able to participate in the public process.
5. The Commission has retained active public participation in its monthly public meetings by moving meetings to a virtual zoom platform during the COVID pandemic.

Contact Person(s): Alison Dettmer

Is the control put into practice: Yes

Is this control reducing the risk as expected: Partially

What's Next

1. Continue active social media and direct communication regarding Coastal Commission

votes and actions and keep website current.

2. All monthly 3-4 day Commission meetings have been virtual via Zoom since May 2020. It is anticipated that starting in October 2021 there will be a hybrid version of Coastal Commission meetings with some components in person and some virtual. All Commission meetings will continue to be live streamed.
3. Continue the active role of the Commission's PIO in working with the press.

Next Milestone: December 31, 2021